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Encouraging Self-Reflection by Business Honors Students: Reflective Writing, Films, and Self-Assessments

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INTRODUCTION

I never thought that a single book had significantly influenced my teaching methods for honors students until I recently reopened my copy of *The Moral Imagination*, edited by Oliver F. Williams. *The Moral Imagination* is a collection of essays written nearly twenty years ago on how we might teach students to develop a sense of moral imagination through literature, art, and film. The book's subtitle—*How Literature and Films Can Stimulate Ethical Reflection in the Business World*—elucidates the focus of the book, and a good definition for Williams's use of the term "moral imagination" is the "uniquely human ability to conceive of fellow humanity as moral beings and as persons, not as objects whose value rests in utility or usefulness" (Jones).

As with most books I have read, I do not remember exactly why I read *The Moral Imagination* in the first place. I do remember when I first read the

book, though, because it was at the start of my college teaching career eight years ago, when I began collecting books to inform my teaching. Most likely, I found the book because I was searching for materials on teaching business ethics, a subject that receives continuing emphasis in schools of business and that was an early as well as ongoing interest in my college teaching career.

The Moral Imagination has several themes that have become the building blocks of my approach to teaching business honors students not only in courses focused on ethics but also in courses on leadership and strategy. After I re-read the book for this article, I had to sheepishly admit to myself that I had forgotten where I had first seen these ideas so thoughtfully presented and had come to think of them as my own—an appropriately humbling experience.

The Moral Imagination offers challenges to be overcome in teaching business honors students as well as techniques for “honors distinctiveness” (Cooke 190). The book addresses nine major themes:

Careerism: Students, particularly students in professional schools and most particularly students in schools of business, too often ask “What shall I do?” rather than “Who am I?” (Williams i).

Cultural Literacy: MBA students, law students, and medical students score poorly on tests in the liberal arts, social sciences, and natural sciences, with MBA students at the bottom of the heap (Williams 20). Michael Goldberg—in his essay in *The Moral Imagination* titled “Doesn’t Anybody Read the Bible Anymo?”—decries the “cultural anorexia” that business and professional school students suffered in the decade or two even before his essay was published in 1997 (Williams 19).

Integrating Ethics into Day-to-Day Lives: Reflection on ethical issues promotes the argument that ethics should not be a separate discipline to be learned and repeated, like Generally Accepted Accounting Principles, but rather a sustained way of thinking about ourselves and our relationship with society that should pervade all of our thought processes.

Imagination and Empathy: Films, art, and texts that students find engaging cause students to imagine themselves as having had the experiences of others, thereby enhancing their empathy and their ability to see the consequences of their own actions. Research by Evan Kidd and Emanuele Castano has shown that people who have recently read literary fiction perform better on empathy measures, perhaps because they take “an active writerly role” in understanding the inner lives of the characters in the works read (380).

Vision: Asking students to find and define the vision for the strategies of their lives, their careers, and their businesses without giving them the experiential tools to do so is like asking students to be fluent in a foreign language without ever asking them to speak the language.

Critical Thinking: Requiring that students be analytical spectators of the sometimes messy process by which “facts” emerge in films, books, and art is a necessary complement to the many parts of a business curriculum that emphasize “the facts of the matter” (Williams 22), causing them to think critically about what plays out in front of them in their lives.

Inner Lives: The business world has no structure for “silent reflection and the grueling inner work that moral introspection requires” (Williams 29), so showing students how to provide such structure for themselves while in college may help to develop their inner lives once in business. Martha Nussbaum argues that the liberal arts cause us to examine our “insides” (85–87).

Self-Awareness: Requiring students to think about themselves in a critical way can help improve their emotional intelligence by promoting their self-awareness.

Synthesis: Business school curricula too often offer courses that are discipline-specific, rarely including information from other business disciplines, let alone disciplines outside of business. Life is not neatly divided into disciplines.

These nine themes at the heart of *The Moral Imagination* inspired the structure of my honors course in business leadership, which I describe in the following section, after which I delve into the specific learning activities that I have used to apply the themes, i.e., reflective writing, film analysis, and self-assessments. These techniques might be useful in honors courses not only in business but, for instance, in general courses on ethics or leadership.

BUSINESS HONORS LEADERSHIP COURSE

The University of Alabama at Birmingham (UAB) is a typical university setting for a separate honors curriculum. Liberal arts students are in the minority at this healthcare-focused research university of approximately 18,000 students, about a third of whom are undergraduates in the school of arts and sciences.

Curricula at the university reflect the healthcare strategy of the institution. New majors that have been developed in recent years often have a healthcare focus. Numerous interdisciplinary majors, such as biomedical engineering, involve health disciplines, and non-healthcare departments are encouraged to offer interdisciplinary courses with health-related departments. The school of business, for instance, has tracks within majors that have a healthcare emphasis, and entire courses throughout the university's curriculum have a healthcare focus, e.g., the economics of healthcare or medical sociology. Faculty integrate healthcare into a wide range of courses; for example, in my course on strategic leadership, during which I invite CEOs to interact with students, about a quarter of the invited speakers typically come from healthcare fields.

Over thirty percent of students at the university are first-generation college students, many coming from high schools outside of large metropolitan areas, and the university's healthcare focus is a major draw. Biology is the intended major of many incoming students to the university's honors college, of which my business-focused honors program is a part, although some decide later to major in a business discipline. Even though all students are required to have at least four three-hour courses in the fine arts and humanities, business students, including honors students, rarely take more than the minimum. We accept non-business majors into our business honors program, but their majors are usually in the sciences or social sciences.

I became the director of our undergraduate business honors program in 2008. The school of business has approximately two thousand undergraduate students and six hundred graduate students. I was asked to develop a new curriculum for the program, focused on business leadership. I maintained the selectivity requirements for the program, which are based on an overall GPA, a school of business GPA, and faculty recommendations. The program today has thirty to thirty-five students in each cohort, which I consider the maximum number for maintaining an honors seminar experience. I developed a curriculum consisting of three three-hour courses: (1) an introduction to leadership course (the subject of this article), (2) a strategic leadership course; and (3) an independent research course. Students in the first course are usually in the second semester of their junior year and complete the independent research course in their final semester as seniors.

The teaching techniques described in the introductory course on leadership are my attempts at best practices in honors pedagogy and not simply "good teaching practices" (Fuiks 105). As Laird Edman states in his Conclusion to the 2000 NCHC monograph *Teaching and Learning in Honors*,

“Honors pedagogy nurtures and challenges students to become self-motivated, self-regulating engaged thinkers” (Fuiks 103). The learning activities in my course are designed to accomplish this goal.

A variety of textbooks on leadership, including many on business leadership, can help build a course like mine. I eventually settled on a relatively slim offering by David Shriberg and Arthur Shriberg, *Practicing Leadership*. Initially, I started with a more traditional, much longer textbook by one of the major textbook publishers. The students did not read it, and I did not enjoy teaching from it because it could take the most fascinating topics in leadership and make them dry and formulaic. No amount of “sidebar” examples could liven them up. With several important exceptions, *Practicing Leadership* reflects the topics that I think are necessary in an introductory course on leadership, and reading it represents only about 10% or less of the total learning activities.

The learning modules in the course are as follows, reflecting my overall goal of starting with the students’ inner lives and moving to their external lives to teach them about how they can become leaders:

- Introduction to the course: Why study leadership?
- History of the study of leadership
- Psychology and leadership: traits and characteristics
- Psychology and leadership: motivation and communication
- Teams and leadership
- Leadership styles
- Negotiation and leadership
- Entrepreneurship and leadership
- Creativity and leadership
- Leadership and diversity
- Servant leadership
- Leadership and ethical decision-making
- Team exercises on leadership skills

The course ratings are consistently the highest of my course ratings as a professor each semester and among the highest in our school of business.

Student comments encourage me that learning objectives are being met. One student wrote, “I not only gained knowledge in this class, but I grew as a person. Mr. Yoder helped me have the confidence in myself that I was lacking. I had heard from others and could see through my achievements that I was intelligent, but I was always second guessing myself and now know that I do know the answers.” Another wrote, “I understand this is a business honors class, but this class has truly been inspiring. It has allowed me to see certain viewpoints and strengthened my beliefs in different fields.” Student ratings for this course are slightly higher than those for the remaining two courses in the honors program, but this might be explained by the somewhat greater rigor of the second two courses, particularly the independent research required in the final course.

LEARNING ACTIVITIES

Reflective Writing

One of the cornerstone learning activities in the introductory course on leadership is a reflective journal that I set up for students inside the course’s learning management system, Canvas. Unlike Blackboard, which has a specific function called “Journal” that allows students to communicate privately with the instructor, Canvas does not have a specific function for journaling, but I use the “Assignment” function and ask that students submit a reflective text paragraph or two each week on that class’s topic. Canvas allows me to comment on each submission, which I try to do on a weekly basis. I try to be reflective myself in my comments to serve as a model for students. Only the student and I can see the student’s journal, which counts for 20% of the final grade. Over the course of the semester, the students have each created a cumulative journal, and I encourage them periodically to look back at their earlier reflections.

During the first class and often in my private comments on their journal entries after that, I describe for students what I mean by “self-reflective” writing: “Don’t tell me what I told you, because I know that already”; “Tell me what you know about yourself that you did not know before”; “Tell me how this might have transformed you, even if just a bit.” I also give them prompts such as the following:

- “Thinking back on this, I . . .”
- “I had always assumed that . . .”

- “I never thought of this connection before, but . . .”
- “My emotions while reading or thinking about this were. . .”

In the 2015 volume of *Honors in Practice*, Kathy J. Cooke describes a similar device she has used with her honors students called “First-Person Noting.” Cooke writes,

Through First-Person Noting, students observe and acknowledge the subjective elements of their academic experience, in particular the thoughts, sensations, and feelings that occur while they read, write, listen, discuss, and reflect. (190).

Cooke observes that the roots of First-Person Noting lie in mindfulness meditation, often associated with Jon Kabat-Zinn (Cooke 191).

In order to explain to students why I have them write reflectively, I also compare reflective thinking with critical thinking, explaining that reflective thinking and writing are more about making judgments while critical writing and thinking are more about solving problems. Some students have more trouble than others being self-reflective, unwilling to offer me a peek inside their minds, preferring instead to give me a recitation of what I said during class. This reticence could be an outgrowth of the careerist attitude among some professional school students, who view reflection as less important to their vocations than remembering rules. I am trying to push students up the “DIKW” hierarchy—from Data and Information, to Knowledge and Wisdom—described by Larry Crockett in the NCHC monograph *Teaching and Learning in Honors* (Fuiks 22).

In addition to the semester-long reflective journal, I assign longer reflective essays on two of the leadership topics that lend themselves to more complete analysis: the students’ own traits and characteristics, as expressed in a Myers-Briggs Personality Type Indicator (MBTI) and the students’ own experiences with a “servant leader,” defined by Robert Greenleaf as a “servant first” who then makes a “conscious choice . . . to aspire to lead” (Greenleaf Center). These essays together count for 15% of the total grade. In addition to the reflective content, these essays give me a window on students’ ability to organize their thoughts in multi-paragraph writing, with an introduction, a logical progression of ideas, topic sentences, and a conclusion. These skills are not always present in business students.

The reflective writing required in this course should help prepare students for their independent research in the final course of the program, one year

later, by giving them confidence that they have the ability to do more than merely acquire the Data and Information produced by others (Fuiks 22). The process of reflecting can demonstrate to them that they have the ability to create new Knowledge and achieve Wisdom, if only about themselves. The same skills can be applied to the world around them.

Films

Oliver Williams's collection of essays, described at the beginning of this essay, caused me to consider seriously the use of films as a teaching tool for ethical reflection. I have since extended their use to reflection on other topics in leadership education. The essays in *The Moral Imagination* showed me how to use not only films with business settings, such as *The Apartment* and *Glen-garry Glen Ross*, to teach business ethics (Williams 127–42) but also films set outside the world of business, such as *Dead Poets Society* and *To Kill a Mockingbird* (Williams 19–32).

With business students, films have an advantage over literature for their novelty in a business course syllabus. In addition, we cannot always expect even high-achieving honors students in professional fields to read great literary works—like those of Dickens—that focus on the moral imagination. Finally, the advent of technologies that allow students not only to access films easily from sites such as YouTube and Netflix but also to play them conveniently on devices such as their smart phones makes movies a popular learning activity among my students.

Films allow students to reflect on an experience. John Dewey argues that education should be the “reconstruction or reorganization of experience” (81), and reflection on an experience necessarily involves self-reflection because, as Carol Rodgers has written, “An experience is not an experience unless it involves interaction between the self and another person, the material world, an idea, or whatever constitutes the environment at hand” (846).

At the beginning of the course, I divide students into teams, which remain in place throughout the semester, based on their preferences for studying and presenting on one of the films used in the course. Not surprisingly, the older, less well-known films (often in black and white) are the least-requested. However, most students assigned to such films acknowledge their value after studying them. The teams work together not only to analyze and present on their respective films but also to confer and then jointly critique the presentations of the other film teams. The team presentations count for 25% of the total grade. Each team is instructed to work ahead in the learning activities

for the module in which their film is used and to assist me in presenting the leadership themes illustrated in their film.

Cast Away and *Twelve O'Clock High*: Motivation and Communication

The first film in the learning module on motivation and communication is *Cast Away* (2000). In this module, we study Maslow's hierarchy of needs in order to understand how leaders should motivate followers and themselves. The film begins with a hard-charging business executive, Chuck Noland (Tom Hanks), seemingly at the top of his career but apparently too busy to fulfill the personal side of his life. After his airplane crashes, Chuck is the sole survivor on a deserted island and must revert back to the bottom of the hierarchy of needs and tend to his food, safety, and shelter. We are left wondering at the end of the film whether he will achieve the higher-order needs for love and belonging and for self-actualization.

I ask students to consider how Maslow's hierarchy can apply in a work setting, posing questions like "What role does providing a suitable workspace for employees serve?" and "Is there value in throwing the occasional pizza party to celebrate a job well done?" We discuss the book *The Progress Principle: Using Small Wins to Ignite Joy, Engagement, and Creativity at Work*, in which Teresa Amabile and Steven Kramer show that the most creative workers are those whose "inner work lives" are nourished with a sense of progress provided by their leaders, and we consider whether Chuck survives because he learns to appreciate the "small wins." *Cast Away* also allows for a fruitful discussion of empathy, which according to Daniel Goleman's *Emotional Intelligence* is a key element of EI, the others being self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, and social skill.

Cast Away is the first of several movies starring Tom Hanks that I use in this course, and I could use even more, e.g., *Captain Phillips* (2013), to illustrate leadership themes. I ask students to reflect on how Hanks might go about choosing his movie roles and whether he is purposefully choosing leadership-themed roles. For at least some students, this is the first time they have considered that movies can be made, or that actors can choose their roles, in order to illustrate a theme related to business.

Twelve O'Clock High (1949) provides a stark contrast to *Cast Away*: it is filmed in black and white; its actors are people that many students have never heard of, and it is set during World War II, with which many students are relatively unfamiliar. Consequently, this film is rarely a team's first choice.

The film tells the story of Air Force Brigadier General Frank Savage (Gregory Peck), who takes over command of a bombing group with a poor success record and poor morale. His first leadership style is harshly authoritarian; he delivers the following words to his men to address their natural fears of flying bombing missions over enemy territory: "I'm not trying to tell you not to be afraid. Fear is normal. But stop worrying about it and about yourselves. Stop making plans. Forget about going home. Consider yourselves already dead." Students can see right away that such a speech is probably not an effective motivational technique. Later, Savage's leadership evolves into an exhausting, pacesetting style in which he personally flies on many of his unit's bombing missions, leaving Savage unable to speak at the end of the movie even though the performance record of his unit has improved dramatically. The film raises important questions about how a leader should act in a crisis. The ambiguity about whether Frank Savage was a successful leader also provides good material for reflection on the relative rarity of clearly happy endings in movies and in life.

Saving Private Ryan: Leadership Styles

Another war-themed film in the learning module on leadership styles is *Saving Private Ryan* (1998). After a focus in the first several learning modules on innate characteristics of leaders and their followers that cannot be easily changed, we move to a portfolio of styles that can be developed and used by leaders to inspire followers. Once again, Daniel Goleman in *Leadership that Gets Results* has provided the structure for this topic with his inventory of leadership styles: coercive, authoritative, affiliative, democratic, pacesetting, and coaching (9). Referring back to Frank Savage's pacesetting in *Twelve O'Clock High*, we can see the relationship between motivation and styles of leadership.

In *Saving Private Ryan*, Tom Hanks has once again made a movie that beautifully illustrates leadership principles. His Captain John Miller is appropriately authoritarian and coercive when his men are being shot at upon landing on the Normandy beaches at the beginning of the film. Throughout the film, he is one of the men, coaching and pacesetting. At one point he polls his men on what they think he should do, illustrating a democratic style. One of the most dramatic scenes in the film comes when his men are in deep disagreement with their mission. He then reveals that he is a high school English teacher and that his motivation is simply to get back to his life in Pennsylvania,

raising the question of whether a leader should reveal personal details to followers and, if so, when.

The discussion of *Saving Private Ryan* illustrated that students can find things in a film that teachers had not thought of, even after using it as a teaching tool for years. One recent team, for example, pointed out that Matt Damon's Private Ryan character also demonstrated the affiliative style of leadership by refusing to leave his military "brothers" even though three of his real-life brothers had recently died in battle.

Finally, *Saving Private Ryan* provides some wonderful examples of low emotional intelligence in characters such as the belligerent Sergeant Mike Horvath and the hapless interpreter Timothy Upham.

Miracle and Remember the Titans: Leadership and Teams

Two films that students often chose first for their teams were *Miracle* (2004), the story of the 1980 U.S. Olympic hockey team, and *Remember the Titans* (2000), the story of a football team at a recently integrated high school in 1970s Richmond, Virginia. Both films have actors who are familiar to students (Kurt Russell in *Miracle*, and Denzel Washington in *Remember the Titans*).

In this learning module, students learn about the stages of team development first described by Bruce Tuckman in his 1965 article "Developmental Sequence in Small Groups": forming, storming, norming, performing, and adjourning (396–97). Both films have happy endings with highly functioning teams. Along the way, however, mainly in the storming phases, we see some classically bad team behaviors. With the emphasis on group and team work in schools today (see *Quiet: The Power of Introverts in a World That Can't Stop Talking* by Susan Cain), all students have experienced one or more of these dysfunctions, making great fodder for reflection. In that regard, I also invite students to reflect on how their team experiences in this course, where all of the students are high-achieving honors students, differ from their other heterogeneous teams.

We recall the students' traits and characteristics as well in this module, looking at what the students' MBTI types add, or subtract, from a team and considering whether diligent INTJs for instance, realize that they can come off as impatient with others. I encourage reflection and critical thinking about what might be the MBTI types of the characters in *Miracle* and *Remember the Titans* and how they help or hinder their leadership. Teaching students about teams creates an awareness of a "community of learning," which is then

reinforced by the team film assignments and team discussions (Linda Rutland Gillison in Fuiks 106).

12 Angry Men: Leadership and Negotiation

For our learning module on negotiations, we go back several decades to another black and white film, *12 Angry Men* (1957), with which most students are not familiar. I tell the students that in 1957 the cast of *12 Angry Men* was an all-star lineup and, if made today with the same caliber of actors, would feature Hollywood's best. As this film opens, Juror number eight, the Henry Fonda character, is the lone not-guilty vote on the first jury ballot in the trial of a young minority man accused of murder.

In this module, I use the book *Getting to Yes: Negotiating Agreement Without Giving In* by Roger Fisher, William Ury, and Bruce Patton. The authors analyze the three most common negotiation techniques: power, rights, and interests, concluding that finding mutual interests is ultimately the most effective technique because power can be fleeting and rights can be unclear. Negotiating based on mutual interests requires good listening skills as well as good communication skills.

Juror number eight exemplifies the *Getting to Yes* preferred style of negotiation by listening and persuading. He has healthy skepticism, giving him the ability to suspend judgment until he has been able to analyze the situation. By contrast, several jurors unsuccessfully attempt to use power (yelling) and rights ("the defendant's lawyers would have told us that if it were true"). I ask students to reflect on how they negotiate in their own lives, in their relationships with their parents, and in their relationships with professors, analyzing when they do and do not have power in their negotiations.

The Social Network: Leadership and Entrepreneurship

The Social Network (2010) is one of the most recent films I use in this course. The ubiquity of Facebook (the subject of the film) piques their interest and makes the team for this film a popular choice among the students. I added this module to the course in the past few years due to the increasing focus on entrepreneurship in schools of business. Entrepreneurship is not covered in the Shriberg textbook that I use in the course, so I add other learning activities such as excerpts from *Brewing Up a Business*, the story of Sam Calagione's creation of Dogfish Head Craft Brewery.

The Social Network demonstrates the often precarious nature of entrepreneurial teams with its unsympathetic portrayal of how Mark Zuckerberg treated his colleagues. Students note that Zuckerberg, at least as played in the film, succeeded as an entrepreneur but failed as a friend. On the positive side, students can picture in Zuckerberg the common characteristics of an entrepreneur: his desire for autonomy, his creativity, his need for achievement, and his risk-taking.

I have also used *The Pursuit of Happyness* (2006) in this module. Starring Will Smith, this film tells the true story of a homeless man, Chris Gardner, raising a young son alone and seeking to break into the ruthlessly competitive business of retail stock brokerage. The film illustrates how one can be entrepreneurial by entering a brand new field with little or no experience. Gardner shares the positive need for the autonomy, creativity, achievement, and risk-taking characteristics of Mark Zuckerberg but is much more likeable. The film also can provoke a powerful discussion of Maslow's hierarchy of needs as students experience how Gardner and his son sleep on the floor of a subway bathroom.

Apollo 13: Leadership and Creativity

Creativity is a nontraditional topic for an introductory course in leadership, but if we are going to illustrate for students how entrepreneurial leaders work, and if a key element of being an entrepreneur is creativity, then this topic is appropriate. One of the key ideas is that the term means more than artistic creativity but should be viewed as the cognitive process of making novel things useful in all contexts. With that definition, students discover how creativity is important in the business world. The Apple iPhone was both novel and useful. Microsoft's "Kin" phone, which failed after just a few months on the market in 2010, was neither.

Apollo 13 (1995) serves as a history lesson as well as a lesson on creativity as a cognitive style and not just as artistry. Most students have not seen the film and know very little about the aborted lunar landing mission in 1970 that is the subject of the film. As described in the self-assessments section below, before the *Apollo 13* student team makes its presentation, all students have taken the KAI Adaptor-Innovator self-assessment to determine whether their cognitive style is more "adaptive" or "innovative." The astronauts in the film nicely demonstrate one and sometimes both of these styles. Commander Jim Lovell, played by Tom Hanks (making his third appearance in the course),

clearly has the analytical, by-the-book characteristics of an Adaptor, but he also shows some Innovator characteristics as he accepts the grim situation enveloping him and his crew. The clearest Innovator is on the ground, Flight Director Gene Kranz (Ed Harris), who among many other tasks necessary to get the astronauts back to earth must find a way for the command module's square air filters to work in the lunar module's round receptacles. In true Innovator style, at one point Kranz declares, "I don't care about what anything was DESIGNED to do, I care about what it CAN do."

The Apartment and *The Devil Wears Prada*: Leadership and Diversity

We cover all dimensions of diversity in this module: gender, culture, age, race, and more. *The Apartment* (1960) and *The Devil Wears Prada* (2006) are designed to provoke reflection on gender diversity by providing a window into the evolution of the roles of women in business over nearly half a century. Not surprisingly given its vintage, very few students volunteer to be a member of *The Apartment* presenting team. On the other hand, *The Devil Wears Prada* has been among the most-requested film teams in the course.

The Apartment is set in a large, faceless insurance company in an equally faceless high-rise office building. The black and white photography and seeming acres of grey metal desks with manual typewriters and calculators combine to make a job at a big business seem like a monotonous chore to be endured. The film, which won a Best Picture Oscar in 1960, tells the story of "Bud" Baxter (Jack Lemmon) working his way up through the organization, in part by allowing his all-male superiors to use his apartment for extramarital trysts. What I ask students to focus on, however, is the film's depiction of women in business in the 1950s and early 1960s. Shirley MacLaine plays an elevator operator, an occupation not known to most college students today. She is "dating" Baxter's married boss, Jeff Sheldrake (Fred MacMurray), and has visited Baxter's apartment with Sheldrake. While on duty in her elevator cab, she is pinched, teased, and otherwise sexually harassed and, most humiliatingly, coldly treated by Mr. Sheldrake, whom she somehow seems to have loved. Other female characters include Mr. Sheldrake's vindictive secretary, known only as "Miss Olsen" (Edie Adams), herself a former girlfriend of her boss; she is fired when she reveals Sheldrake's assignations to his suburban stay-at-home wife. *The Apartment* provides a good platform for discussing the origins of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, in which "sex" was included as a

basis on which employment decisions could not be made and which has been applied to make illegal the types of sexual harassment shown in this film.

I was inspired to use *The Apartment* in the course (I remember seeing the movie in the back seat of my parents' car at a drive-in movie theater and being thoroughly bored) by Dennis McCann's essay "If Life Hands You a Lemmon: Business Ethics from *The Apartment* to *Glengarry Glen Ross*" in Williams's *The Moral Imagination*. I ask students one of the questions suggested by McCann in his essay: Is this really a movie about business, or is business merely a setting for a movie about bad ethics? (Williams 132). McCann also regards Jack Lemmon in the same way I regard Tom Hanks, as an actor with an uncanny ability to choose films with meaning. I follow this learning module deliberately with a module based on *Glengarry Glen Ross*, featuring Jack Lemmon thirty-two years later in his acting career.

Juxtaposed in the same module with *The Apartment* is *The Devil Wears Prada*. Also set in an urban high-rise office building, *The Devil Wears Prada* tells the story of another rising professional. This time, however, the aspirant is female, Andrea Sachs (Anne Hathaway), as is her boss, fashion magazine editor Miranda Priestly (Meryl Streep). On the surface, women seem to have come a long way since the days of *The Apartment*, but at a price. Miranda is more than just cold; she is imperious and mean-spirited, abruptly ending conversations with Andrea by sniffing, "That's all." The film raises the question whether domination is the only way that women can be taken seriously as leaders in business or whether women can show warmth and still be leaders. Most students do not realize that the Miranda Priestly character is likely based on the real-life editor of *Vogue* magazine, Anna Wintour.

Glengarry Glen Ross: Leadership and Ethical Decision-Making

The last film I use in the course is *Glengarry Glen Ross* (1996). This movie reveals a cornucopia of unethical business practices that include lying to customers, selling sales leads to competitors, and firing loyal but under-performing employees down on their luck. Particularly poignant is the character played by a much older Jack Lemmon, Shelley "The Machine" Levene. Shelley was once the star salesman at the real estate firm, but he has been in a sustained sales slump. To further complicate his life, his daughter is hospitalized with an undiagnosed chronic illness. Desperate, Shelley attempts to bribe his boss, John Williamson (Kevin Spacey), to give him good sales leads,

and he impersonates a wealthy client in a scheme by another salesman. *Glen-garry Glen Ross* brutally illustrates the dilemma at the heart of the concept of moral imagination: Is it necessary to act unethically in order to succeed in business? The film also can introduce the subject of moral psychology as a tool in business ethics education by exploring the psychological reasons that people make bad ethical decisions. The film examines why a good person like Shelley Levene would fall prey to unethical business practices and asks its viewers, including my students, whether they would act the same way in the same circumstances.

SELF-ASSESSMENTS

If I could choose just one learning objective for this course on leadership, it would be to promote students' monitoring their inner lives or what Goleman calls "Self-Awareness." According to Goleman, Self-Awareness has three competencies:

- Emotional Awareness: Recognizing one's emotions and their effects.
- Accurate Self-Assessment: Knowing one's strengths and limits.
- Self-Confidence: A strong sense of one's self-worth and capabilities.
(*Emotional Intelligence* (46–55))

Goleman says that self-awareness "trains our attention to notice subtle, but important signals, and to see thoughts as they arise rather than just being swept away by them" ("Q&A"). The assessments I assign to students are powerful triggers for self-reflection.

Self-assessments are also an element of honors pedagogy. In his chapter in the Fuiks monograph, Laird Edman says that "unless students learn to self-assess, learn what they know and do not know and how to judge the difference, they have not learned much in our courses that will transfer out of those courses" (Fuiks 108).

Beginning with the learning module on the traits and characteristics of a leader, I use five self-administered self-assessments over the course of the semester to enhance awareness of all three of Goleman's Emotional Intelligence competencies and to provoke self-reflection. Taking and reporting on the five assessments count as part of students' discussion and participation grade, which is approximately 25% of the total grade.

Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI) Assessment

The MBTI is a self-report designed to indicate preferences in how people perceive the world and make decisions. Many other tools are available to categorize and describe individuals' traits and characteristics, such as DiSC (dominance, influence, steadiness, and compliance) and Gallup Strengths-Finder. However, I learned the fundamentals of MBTI when I was in business before entering higher education, and I understand that it is still commonly used in business. I tell students that I do not care exactly which tool they use to inspect their own traits and characteristics so long as they can and do apply what they learn in their personal and professional lives. I also caution them not to use what they learn about themselves as excuses for bad behavior.

I direct students to take one of several online assessments available for the MBTI, e.g., the Jung Typology Test, and ask them to give me both their four MBTI dimensions (Introvert vs. Extrovert; Intuitive vs. Sensing; Thinking vs. Feeling; and Judging vs. Perceiving) as well as the strength of their preferences in each of these dimensions. If a student has a low preference for a particular dimension, a re-taking of the assessment could show a slight preference for the opposite side of that dimension, and the student should be open to learning more about that opposite side.

We discuss the most common MBTI types for business honors students and why these types would be typical for them. We discuss whether students with a strong "Judging" preference for structure and planning get better grades in college or whether accounting majors are more likely to be Sensors, making decisions by using all five senses rather than intuition. I try to provide real-life illustrations of the various MBTI types even though very few, if any, celebrities or historical figures have revealed their MBTI scores.

One of the two longer self-reflective essays in the course is based on what students learn about themselves from taking the MBTI assessment. Students uniformly report that they were not surprised by their results even if they had never before thought about the MBTI dimensions. I sprinkle MBTI references throughout the rest of the course, particularly in our discussion and reflection on teams. There, the students look at their own film presentation teams and reflect on what each MBTI type adds to or detracts from a team. For example, an Introverted-Intuitive-Thinking-Judger (INTJ) may add to a team by analyzing all the alternatives but hurt a team by moving too fast. Even without prompting, students often refer back to their MBTI results in their reflections on other parts of the course.

Social Sensitivity Assessment

In our module on motivation and communication, we discuss that leaders must learn to listen to all forms of communication from those around them. Research on “collective intelligence” has shown evidence that just as an individual’s general intelligence can be measured, a group can have a collective intelligence that explains its performance on tasks. The research has further shown that three factors are significantly correlated with collective intelligence: (1) average “social sensitivity” is positively correlated; (2) a small number of people dominating the group’s conversations is negatively correlated; and (3) a high proportion of women in the group is positively correlated (Woolley et al. 688).

The assessment tool used in the collective intelligence research to measure social sensitivity is the Reading the Mind in the Eyes Test, in which participants view thirty-six photographs of a human’s eyes and choose which of two adjectives better describes the person’s mental state. The assessment was created by psychologist Simon Baron-Cohen, an expert on autism, and is available online (see References for the link). The typical scores range from twenty-two to thirty correct answers out of thirty-six. Women typically score higher than men.

I ask students to take the assessment before our class on motivation and communication and send me their scores, which I then summarize anonymously at the start of the class. We discuss whether a high score might positively correlate with an MBTI “Feeling” dimension, i.e., making decisions based on their effects on others rather than on strict analysis. We discuss empathy as an element of Emotional Intelligence and discuss whether the Reading the Mind in the Eyes Test can measure empathy. In later classes, we discuss what effect social sensitivity might have on the functioning of a team and on the ability to be an effective negotiator. Students self-reflect on all of these questions in their journals, producing some good introspection even from students who are otherwise reticent. More than one student in a recent class pointed out that the television series *Lie to Me* features a detective with a high level of social sensitivity.

General Enterprising Tendency Assessment

Before our class on entrepreneurship and leadership, students take a self-assessment test called the General Enterprising Tendency Test, version 2, or GET2. This test measures some of the same tendencies of entrepreneurs

described above: autonomy, creativity, a need for achievement, and risk-taking. Completing the test takes about ten minutes and provides an idea of a person's "enterprising potential," defined as the "tendency to start up and manage projects" (Caird 4). Scores can range from very enterprising, to having some enterprising qualities, to "you are probably happiest working with guidance from superiors" (Caird 15).

I find that discussion of this self-assessment can lead to some breakthroughs on self-awareness among students in their reflective journals. Business students are increasingly hearing that entrepreneurs are valued: "Entrepreneurs are the future of the economy." Business schools are creating innovation labs that encourage students to incubate entrepreneurial ideas. Students who score highly on the GET2 assessment likely feel good about such messages and initiatives, and those who do not likely feel queasy, leading to questions about the role for those who are not entrepreneurial: whether they can still be involved in entrepreneurial activities and still be leaders or whether they can be "intrapreneurs" who promote innovation within an established organization (Caird 4).

Cognitive Style Assessment

We cover individuals' cognitive styles in our module on creativity, where *Apollo 13* is a tool for reflecting on how individuals can think through a difficult problem. Cognitive style is not the same thing as cognitive ability, which is usually measured by an intelligence test.

To measure students' cognitive styles, I use an assessment first developed by British psychologist Michael Kirton in 1976, called the Kirton Adaptation-Innovation Inventory (KAI). Kirton concluded that an individual's preferred approach to problem-solving can be placed on a continuum ranging from "Adaptation" to "Innovation" (623). According to Kirton, "Adapters" solve problems by using what is provided to them whereas "Innovators" solve problems using untried techniques. Participants rate themselves against thirty-two personality traits, such as "Solutions sought by tried and true methods" vs. "Use unproven ideas in seeking solutions" (Bobic et al. 31). The actual test is written in simple language so that cognitive level should not affect results. Other tools can measure cognitive style with more dimensions than the KAI test, but for purposes of this introductory course I find that Kirton's assessment is sufficient, and I have developed a shortened version of the test that I have placed in a Quiz in the Canvas learning management system for the course. For an excellent treatment of the role creativity plays in leadership,

see *Creative Leadership: Skills That Drive Change* (2nd ed.) by Gerard Puccio, Marie Mance, and Mary Murdock. These authors have developed a thinking style assessment called The FourSight Thinking Profile, designed to help teams “communicate, collaborate and problem solve.”

Taking the KAI test invites self-awareness not only by revealing a student’s own place on the Adaptor-Innovator continuum but also by revealing how others might view his or her style. For example, others might view a strong Adaptor as “compliant” or “dogmatic” and see a strong Innovator as “impractical” or “undisciplined.” Knowing how others see us is a key element of Emotional Intelligence.

Negotiating Style Assessment

I devote two separate modules to negotiation. As *The New York Times* columnist David Brooks has written, universities should be delivering two types of knowledge: first, technical knowledge about *what* to do; and second, practical knowledge, which is *how* to do it. Brooks believes that as online education becomes more pervasive, universities will have to get better at delivering practical knowledge because students will be able to find their technical knowledge from a wide array of distant providers. I believe that negotiation skills are just the sort of practical knowledge that our students will need, particularly business honors students who we hope will be leading business organizations someday.

Having used the film *12 Angry Men* to explore the concepts of negotiation in *Getting to Yes*, we devote the last class of the semester to various negotiating exercises to give students practice in the actual art of negotiation, including the “ugly oranges” exercise (see Barkai). In that exercise, pairs of students negotiate over who should get a shipment of rare oranges, where each student has an important purpose to be served if he or she gets the oranges. One student believes she needs the rinds of the oranges to neutralize a toxic gas on a tropical island. The other believes he needs the juice of the oranges to help the mothers of unborn children suffering from a rare condition. At the start of the exercise, neither student knows why the other needs the oranges or what part of the oranges the other needs. The goal is to demonstrate that through good listening and communication, both parties can get what they want from the negotiation.

Prior to the final class, I have students complete an online self-assessment based on the Thomas-Kilmann Conflict Mode Instrument that I have adapted from *The Labor Relations Process* (Holley, Jennings, & Wolters) and

made into a Quiz in Canvas. This exercise is designed to identify which of five negotiation styles students prefer: Avoiding, Competing, Accommodating, Compromising, or Collaborating. These styles can be plotted in a grid with two dimensions: Assertiveness and Cooperativeness. For example, Avoiding would be in the lower left quadrant of the grid as low in both Assertiveness and Cooperativeness. At the opposite corner of the grid would be Collaborating, which is high in both dimensions. A Compromising style would be in the middle of the grid, moderate in both dimensions. I do not tell students in advance exactly why I am having them take this assessment and do not label it as a “negotiation style” assessment so that I can make special pairings for the “ugly oranges” exercise, with concentrations or mixtures of the various styles in the pairings. After the pairs negotiate, we discuss whether the Avoiders and Competers were more likely to withhold information about why they needed the oranges than the Collaborators and Compromisers. We consider whether the Competers were more likely to see negotiation as a zero-sum game than Collaborators, whether collaboration was always the most successful style, and whether a Competer would always win when paired with an Accommodator or Avoider. The exercise presents great opportunities for students to examine their inner lives reflectively.

CONCLUSION

As Fuijs has argued, honors pedagogy should challenge students “to become self-motivated, self-regulating engaged thinkers” (103). In my course, student reading and instructor-led classroom discussion of the concepts of self-awareness and emotional intelligence lay the groundwork for the importance of self-knowledge in a leader. Watching and analyzing movies and reading fiction allow students to practice active, “writerly” thinking in order to understand the characters in these works. The self-assessments provide the students a window into themselves, and the reflective journaling encourages them to describe what they have seen.

The violinist Isaac Stern beautifully illustrated the importance of pausing amid the torrent of events that come at us in life. Stern was asked why all musicians presumably play the same notes in the same order and yet some sound much better than others. His response: “But it isn’t the notes that are important, it’s the intervals between the notes” (“Wisdom”). Self-reflection provides intervals in the lives of students that can make their personal and professional lives more melodious.

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